Brittany Gregory

MyBookCASE

Children's Literature

2/5/13

Option 1

1/2. *Harry Potter* Series by J. K. Rowling

The *Harry Potter* series were the books that really opened the door to reading for me. I believe that anyone can like reading once they've found the right book. For me, that book was *Harry Potter.* I suddenly believed that reading was something fun and exciting as opposed to boring. Texts in class were all I'd ever been exposed to; even if I'd been read to as a child, I didn't remember enough to know if I enjoyed it. The series shaped my childhood. *Harry Potter* taught me the importance of friendship, courage, the difference between right and wrong, and good and bad, among other things. On the surface, it's about magic, but there are so many lessons to be learned throughout Harry's seven years at Hogwarts.

*Magic Tree House* Series by Mary Pope Osborne

When my teacher would have designated reading time in class, I'd always choose books from the *Magic Tree House* Series. Even back when I was young, I had an interest in history. With these books I got to explore time/history with the main characters. I probably liked them so much because they taught of the past through the prospective of someone like me, an explorer – someone who has no background on the subject matter but is willing to learn. These books were more exciting then sitting through a history lesson, where we'd learn random facts; The *Magic Tree House* Series made you a part of history, and I guess I really liked that.

*Dear America* Series

Similar to the *Magic Tree House* Series, the *Dear America* series interested me in the same way; they're both about history. However, with the *Dear America* series, the prospective of the books is through the main character (a child of the time period). These books helped me see other prospectives than my own in situations I could never have experienced until these books were written.

3. These books show children facing and overcoming adversity. In the *Harry Potter* series, the common message is choosing what's right, even though there could be a struggle to get to that point. Children and young adults can relate to this. Although they're not saving the wizarding world from oppression, they still deal with peer pressure, situations that are challenging for them, and so on. There are bad things in this world that we're not exposing youth to, but *Harry Potter* explain that if it happens upon them, children can overcome it. The *Magic Tree House* and *Dear America* have similar messages, except they use a historical twist to tell the story. These books use the idea that our country has already prospered, despite hardship. All three books show children being the heroes. I think children can relate to these books because the characters are relatable. They are characters students can aspire to be.

5. *English Language Arts Classes*

a.) Focus on English Language Arts is higher than ever because of state testing and standards, so the specific materials used in the classrooms is important. As a foundation, having material that appeals to the students is something that needs to be provided in the classroom. This could mean types of books, the ways books are presented; having a multitude of differentiation keeps the curriculum fresh and the students engaged.

Multicultural material is one type that belongs in the classroom. More and more students come from nontraditional backgrounds. Having the students relate to what they're reading is necessary because it helps them connect to the material and grow/maintain background on the subject. So, focusing on our differences, acknowledging them in the first place is beneficial to students. The article “Teaching Of,” branches into multilingual English being touched upon. Our nation is becoming a more diverse one. Not too many years from now, our country will no longer be of a white majority. Exposing students to multilingual materials can not only broaden their learning, but prepare students for the United States they're growing up into.

Expanding upon the growing nation, it's also worth mentioning that we're advancing technologically as well. We're evolving and having many aspects of multimedia in the classroom could benefit the students. In an internship I'm currently doing, my cooperating teacher requires her students to do a fifteen minutes minimum of computer-time a day. She understands that, although her generation wasn't run on technology, our generation is. It's better to prepare the students than hinder them.

b.) Books to be provided in the classroom should be diverse. Some examples of subjects to be touched are alternative families, special needs, gender roles, and race/nationality (just to name a few). For younger grades, like K-3, I'd have *And Tango Makes Three* (a book about two daddy penguins who adopt a baby) to talk about alternative families, *Paperbag Princess* (a book about a princess who doesn't fit the stereotypes) to talk about gender roles, and *The Sneetches* (a book about two groups of people who don't accept each other based on appearance) to talk about race/nationality. For upper grades, like 4+, I'd use *Harry Potter*. It wouldn't be the only book I'd use, just like *And Tango Makes Three,* *Paperbag Princess, and The Sneetches* are just a few books I'd use to cover those subjects. However, *Harry Potter* talks about alternative families (raised by aunt and uncle), gender roles (Hermione Granger), and differences race (blood-status). Overall, it's important give students an opportunity in school to cover these topics; having conversations will generate ideas and opinions, and school should be a safe environment to do that.